

## William Neal Merry, 75



William Neal Merry, 75, died May 5, 2017 after a lengthy illness. He was born April 8, 1942 to the late Stanley H. and Alice (Neale) Merry.

Neal graduated from Duxbury High School in 1960. He went to Wabash College in Crawfordsville, IN, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree in environmental biology and then he went to Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN, where he concentrated in natural resource management and commercial aviation technology.

His vocation and interests were varied and intertwined. Having learned to fly in college, he became a flight instructor (cockpit, classroom, and simulator) with the Northeastern University Aviation Technology program at Wiggins Airways in Norwood, MA. Aviation became his passion and seaplanes his favorite subjects. Working on the family cranberry bogs also brought Neal a great deal of enjoyment. He took every opportunity to promote cranberries and the Ocean Spray Cooperative. He was also interested in the heavy duty trucking industry, and he worked as a sales manager for three Fortune 500 companies before becoming an independent manufacturer's representative.

As a lifelong Duxbury resident, Neal served the town in various capacities. In his teens he mowed school lawns, was the lifeguard at Duxbury Beach and taught swimming and sailing at the town pier, Shipyard Lane and Standish Shore. Later he became Duxbury's first beach conservation officer. Many of the programs he implemented still exist today. He also served on several committees and boards. He was a member of the Duxbury High School Rebuilding Committee, Beach Advisory Committee and the Governor's representative to the Duxbury Housing Authority at the time Duxborough Village was built. Neal was especially proud of being a trustee of Partridge Academy where several of his relatives attended school and of being elected assessor for 30 years.

Neal belonged to a number of fraternal, social and service organizations including several Masonic Lodges, Kappa Sigma Fraternity, Quiet Birdmen and Old Colony Club.

Although Neal had an exceptionally strong work ethic, he managed to combine hard work with enough fun so he always seemed to be on an adventure. Some may remember him as a young boy giving birthday party pony rides ('10 cents, ride at your own risk'), as a teenager teaching friends to drive and chugging through the woods to the Town Hall in a cut-down Model A truck and putting together "Horribles" for the Fourth of July Parade. Later, he could be seen giving rides in his restored Model A, offering cranberry bog tours to adults and children and giving friends and family a thrill flying them over Duxbury and the surrounding areas. Poor health slowed him but never broke his spirit. Neal became an armchair adventurer instead and faced his many challenges with great courage, a sense of humor and without complaint.

Neal leaves his wife Elizabeth "Beth" (Boland) Merry, daughter Gwenn Merry (David Heikes), daughter Natalie Merry and grandchildren Elaina and Daniel Heikes. He also leaves his brother Alan S. Merry (Leslie), brother-in-law Thomas W. Herrick, III (Catherine), sisters in-law Debbie Herrick, Gwenn Caldwell, Penelope Herrick and the late Daphne Dunn, as well as many cousins, nieces, nephews, and dear friends. We celebrate Neal by reflecting on a life well lived.

Memorial donations may be made to Duxbury Beach Reservation, Inc., Box 2593, Duxbury, MA 02331, or Cranberry Hospice, 36 Cordage Park Circle, Suite 326, Plymouth, MA 02360. For online condolences, visit [shepherdfuneralhome.com](http://shepherdfuneralhome.com).